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Letters from the People

Senator Dodd Explains

From your editorial comment and from other editorials, it is apparent that there has been much misunderstanding of the purpose of the hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security in the case of Dr. Linus Pauling.

First of all, I wish to emphasize as I have already done repeatedly that the United States Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security is not investigating Dr. Pauling's viewpoint on nuclear testing. Nor is there any question of his right or the right of any American citizen to petition the United States Government, either directly or indirectly via the United Nations. The subcommittee is investigating one thing only: Was there substantial Communist participation in the organization of the petition? Was the petition utilized for Communist propaganda purposes?

Dr. Pauling has been asked for two things by the subcommittee: for the actual signatures of those who signed the petition—since he filed typewritten lists instead of the originals; and for the letters he received transmitting to him names for the petition.

It is to be regretted that Dr. Pauling has responded to the subcommittee's simple and reasonable request by impugning the honesty of the members of the subcommittee, by misrepresenting the issue as one involving the right of petition and academic freedom, by posing as a martyr.

The arguments contained in Dr. Pauling's petition may or may not have been intrinsically valid; on this the subcommittee does not pass judgment. However, if Communists participated in the work of circulating the petition, they did not do so as individuals or simply because they believe in its purpose. Whatever action a Communist takes is taken under orders and is intended to subserve the interests of the Communist conspiracy.

Dr. Pauling has stated that he refuses "as a matter of conscience" to make public the names of those who collaborated with him in organizing the petition because this would expose them to reprisals. For the life of me, I cannot understand this talk about "reprisals."

The general position that Dr. Pauling holds on nuclear testing is a widely held one. For my own part, I consider it mistaken, but I recognize that it is shared by many

Americans who are genuinely concerned about what they consider to be the best interests of the United States. It is, in some measure, the position of the Administration. Given this situation, it is preposterous to suggest that the subcommittee would inflict reprisals.

It has been stated by Dr. Pauling and by others that the subcommittee's action in this case constitutes a violation of the right of petition. I know of no definition of the right of petition that would confer the privilege of secrecy or anonymity on the organizers of a petition. A petition is by its very nature a public act and it comes under the principle of full disclosure. Dr. Pauling has not committed contempt and the subcommittee did not discuss citing him for contempt. We have made a simple request and have asked for his cooperation on the basis of honor and patriotism and reasonableness.

Thomas J. Dodd
Acting Chairman,
U.S. Senate Subcommittee
On Internal Security